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Governor Sam Brownback Announced “Reading Roadmap” Program

Topeka—Kansas Governor Sam Brownback yesterday announced a “Reading Roadmap” initiative designed to improve reading proficiency among Kansas grade school students by incorporating a wide variety of support services to educators, families and children.

“Research continues to show that literacy serves a vital role in the success of children and families in Kansas,” Governor Brownback said. “Children who read well are more likely to graduate from high school career or college ready, and less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors as teenagers.”

The initiative coordinates several programs with proven track records of success in literacy achievement in Kansas and across the United States. Rural School and Community Trust (RSCT) was awarded a \$9 million TANF grant to partner with Families and Schools Together (FAST) and Save the Children (SCF) to provide the after-school programs focused on rural students. Save the Children’s after school efforts will consist of structured reading practice. FAST will encourage parental involvement through an eight-week program encouraging parents to take an active role in their children’s reading efforts.

Additionally, the Boys & Girls Club will grow its after-school and summer programs to incorporate a research-based literacy component in the urban areas of the state, including Topeka, Hutchinson, Wichita, Lawrence, Manhattan and Kansas City, Kan.

“We are happy to be a part of this important effort,” said Boys & Girls Club of America Government Relations Director Joyce Glasscock. “Improving literacy among our club members will benefit them by helping ensure academic success and an easier path to positive outcomes throughout their lives.”

A separate, privately-funded effort known as Reading Recovery is identifying funding sources, to incorporate an in-school strategy to help teachers and administrators connect, communicate and leverage resources to promote literacy

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The University of Kansas will develop an evaluation system to measure third grade reading proficiency based upon the work of this comprehensive model. Participating schools will need to demonstrate a statistically significant increase in students reading at grade level by the fourth grade. A one-year renewal of grant will be considered, dependent on the success of the program.

More than 20 rural school districts have expressed interest in the Reading Roadmap initiative. Efforts are under way to encourage involvement in additional districts.

“We know that there is no one-size-fits-all program for Kansas students when it comes to learning how to read,” Governor Brownback said. “By effectively targeting our resources to help at-risk youth with a variety of support and services, we will move Kansas students to the top of the list of proficient readers in the U.S. and break the cycle of child poverty.”

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